

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

I.

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested. Claim 2 is presently active in the application. Claim 1 has been canceled.

In the first office action, the examiner acknowledged the information disclosure statement filed by the applicants on September 11, 2002. However, the examiner has not acknowledged the information disclosure statement filed on April 22, 2002, which provided a list of related cases. The examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge that information disclosure statement in the next office action.

II.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Duret et al. (U.S. patent No. 4,742,464) in view of Riley et al. (U.S. patent No. 5,121,333) and Andersson et al. (U.S. patent No. 5,440,496). This rejection is respectfully traversed with respect to new claim 2.

New claim 2 positively recites the steps of preparing a plaster model by impression taking within the oral cavity of a patient and delivering the plaster model to a measuring center. Claim 2 further provides the steps of storing, as a first digital signal, three-dimensional coordinate information of an intra-oral shape measured on a basis of the plaster model at the measuring center and sending the obtained measuring data to a design center using communication means. Support for these recitations is found throughout the specification and, in particular, on page 8 line 16-page 9 line 22, page 10 lines 3-21.

Claim 2 further provides the steps of reproducing the intra-oral shape on graphic display device at the design center based on the measured data, designing a shape of a dental prosthesis, storing that shape as a second digital signal, and then sending the obtained design data of the dental prosthesis to a processing center using a second communication apparatus.

Support for these recitations can be found at page 12 line 20-page 13 line 8 and at page 17 lines 3-5. At the processing center, the received design data is transmitted to a milling processor as a processing command to subject a block material to a milling processing to prepare the dental prosthesis. See the specification at page 17 lines 14-23.

Claim 2 further recites the steps of delivering the dental prosthesis to the measuring center, comparing it with the plaster model, and then returning the prosthesis to the dental office. See the specification at page 17 line 23-page 18 line 2. No new matter has been added to claim 2.

The process set forth in claim 2 permits the dental practitioner to use his or her skills taught in medical school to make a plaster model. Thereafter, the plaster model is delivered to a measuring center where those skilled in the use of plaster model measuring devices are employed. The plaster model is measured at the measuring center and the measured data is transmitted by communication apparatus to a design center where those skilled in the art of CAD techniques are employed. After the prosthesis is designed, the design data is then sent by second communication apparatus to a processing center where those skilled in CAM techniques are employed for the actual manufacture of the prosthesis. Accordingly, the subject matter defined by claim 2 permits those skilled in plaster model making, plaster model measuring, prosthesis design, and prosthesis manufacture to perform the techniques at which they are most skilled. This concept as defined by subject matter of claim 2 is not taught or suggested by the applied references taken alone or in any proper combination. In addition, the steps of returning the dental prosthesis to the measuring center and comparing it with the plaster model before returning it to the dental office is neither taught nor suggested by the applied references. Accordingly, claim 2 clearly patentably distinguishes over the applied references.

III.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Franetzki (WO 96/37163) in view of Riley et al. (U.S. patent No. 5,121,333) and Andersson et al. (U.S. patent No. 5,440,496). This rejection is respectfully traversed with respect to the subject matter defined by claim 2.

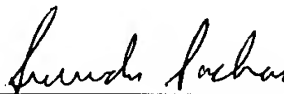
Claim 2 patentably distinguishes over this combination of references for the reasons stated above with respect to the rejection over Duret et al. in view of Riley et al. and Andersson et al. That is, Franetzki fails to make up for the deficiencies noted above with respect to Duret et al., Riley et al., and Andersson et al.

IV.

For the above reasons, applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and allowance of claim 2.

Respectfully submitted,

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